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MR DUMAS SURGES TO WIN GRADE III, \$175,000 COMMONWEALTH TURF

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, Nov. 9, 2019) – **Mr Dumas** ranged into contention on the final turn, grabbed the lead in the stretch and turned back a late challenge from 7-2 favorite **Tracksmith** to win Saturday's 16th running of the \$175,000 Commonwealth Turf (Grade III) at Churchill Downs by a half-length.

The victory gave jockey **Joe Rocco Jr.** his first graded stakes win in the last three years.

Down the backstretch in the early stages of the race Mr Dumas rated a few lengths back of pacesetter **Spectacular Gem**, who led the field of 11 3-year-olds through early quarter-mile splits of :23.79 and :48.61. As **Louder Than Bombs** challenged Tracksmith for the lead into the final turn after six furlongs in 1:13.13, Mr Dumas began to range into contention. He drew even with the leaders with three-sixteenths of a mile to run, surged to the front with a furlong to run and held a closing Tracksmith at bay after the favorite encountered traffic along the inside and had to swing out for a clear run in deep stretch.

Mr Dumas ran 1 1/16 miles over "good" turf in 1:45.51 to collect his first stakes win.

"This horse has really developed into a special horse," said Rocco, who collected his first graded stakes win since **Kiss to Remember** won the 2016 Chilukki (GII) at Churchill Downs. "I was fortunate enough to get a really good trip and was able to tuck in behind the speed and it came back my way. He really has taken well to the turf and I think there are some bigger things down the road for him."

Mr Dumas is a son of Majesticperfection out of the More Than Ready mare Ready Love and was bred in Kentucky by **Ramspring Farm**. The three-time winner returned \$21.40, \$10.60 and \$6.60 as the 9-1 eighth betting choice in the competitive bunch. Tracksmith, with **Brian Hernandez Jr.** up, paid \$4.60 and \$3.20. **Marquee Prince**, ridden by **Tyler Gaffalione**, finished another 1 1/4 lengths back in third and paid \$6.20 to show.

Armistice Day, **Spectacular Gem**, **Faraway Kitten**, **Louder Than Bombs**, **Proliferate**, **Tobacco Road**, **Knicks Go** and **Tiz Plus** completed the order of finish. **Osage Moon**, **Clint Maroon (GB)**, **Pirate's Punch**, **Journeyman** and **Clear Vision** were scratched.

Mr Dumas netted \$101,990 for owners **Hooties Racing LLC** (Mark Moore) and **WSS Racing LLC** (William Simon) and now boasts career earnings of \$211,160 from a record of 5-3-0-2. A winner over dirt sprints and turf routes, he's won three of his last four starts.

"At the beginning of his career I thought he was a two-turn dirt horse," said winning trainer **John Ortiz**. "I was originally thinking a Kentucky Derby-type horse but then with the turf in his pedigree we tried him on the grass. When he ran at Kentucky Downs sprinting I never saw a horse with that fast of a closing kick. It's been a very special journey so far and I'm very thankful for everyone involved."

For Ortiz, it was his third career graded stakes win and second this year. In May, **Honey Bunny** won the \$100,000 Winning Colors (GIII) at Churchill Downs.

COMMONWEALTH TURF QUOTES

Joe Rocco Jr., jockey of MR DUMAS (winner): "This horse has really developed into a special horse. I was fortunate enough to get a really good trip and was able to tuck in behind the speed and it came back my way. He really has taken well to the turf and I think there are some bigger things down the road for him."

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Brian Hernandez Jr., jockey of TRACKSMITH (runner-up): "He did everything right today except win. We sat in a great spot in the inside of the course with the better ground. I'm very proud of his effort and he was just second best to a nice horse."

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